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SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The United States was involved in combat missions in Vietnam between November 1, 1955 and November 30, 1975; and

WHEREAS, In 1961, North Vietnam forces advanced into South Vietnam using the Ho Chi Minh Trail which crossed into Laos; and

WHEREAS, Combat that was fought during this time in Laos is historically known as "the Secret War"; and

WHEREAS, Laotian soldiers and airmen were recruited and trained to engage in guerilla warfare against the North Vietnamese; they fought alongside American soldiers, rescued downed pilots, and defended American outposts; many were injured, tortured, and killed; and

WHEREAS, After the evacuation of allied forces at the end of the war, these soldiers and their families were forced to flee to Thailand for refuge, many eventually immigrated to the United States; and

WHEREAS, Many chose Illinois as their new home, with over an estimated 4,500 Lao Americans settling in Chicago and the collar counties; and

1 WHEREAS, There are fewer than an estimated 100 Lao American
2 veterans still living in Illinois today; and

3 WHEREAS, In 2014, the City of Elgin placed an official
4 plaque at the Elgin Veterans Memorial Park to recognize and
5 honor Laotian veterans who have served alongside United States
6 Armed Forces during the Vietnam War; and

7 WHEREAS, Governor Pat Quinn and Elgin Mayor David Kaptain
8 declared July 19, 2014 as the Lao Veterans Memorial Day, a day
9 to remember these brave soldiers; and

10 WHEREAS, Despite the service of these brave veterans and
11 this public recognition, these few remaining Lao American
12 veterans in Illinois are still denied the right to be buried in
13 U.S. national cemeteries and State cemeteries and are
14 ineligible for other benefits; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we recognize and
17 support these Lao American veterans by acknowledging their
18 service and sacrifice made in fighting alongside U.S. Armed
19 Forces during the Vietnam War; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That we fully support and applaud Governor

1 Quinn's proclamation of July 19, 2014 as Lao Veterans Memorial
2 Day; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That we urge the General Assembly and the
4 Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide burial
5 rights for the few remaining Lao American veterans in Illinois;
6 and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That we urge all Illinois educators when
8 discussing the history of the Vietnam War to share with
9 students of an appropriate age the story of the "Secret War"
10 and the sacrifices made by those who fought alongside U.S.
11 Armed Forces; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That we further commit to exploring ways to
13 develop an Asian American social science and history curriculum
14 for public schools that would provide in one centralized
15 structure the shared history of events, such as the story of
16 the "Secret War" and the service of Lao veterans, along with
17 many other examples of Asian American experiences in the United
18 States; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
20 presented to the executive directors of the Lao American
21 Organization of Elgin, Lao Veterans Organization of Illinois,
22 Lao American Community Services, and Asian Americans Advancing

SR1173

-4-

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1 Justice-Chicago.